

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02832 141224Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 2832

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP ETRN

SUBJ: ANGOLAN/ZAIRIAN RECONCILIATION

REF: (A) STATE 200867, (B) LUSAKA 2670

1. EMBASSY OFFICER DISCUSSED ZAMBIAN EXPECTATIONS RE REOPENING OF BENGUELA RR WITH GRZ TRANSPORT MINISTER KINGSLEY CHINKULI ON AUGUST 11. CHINKULI WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS OF REOPENING OF BENGUELA IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE BUT SAID ZAMBIA LOOKED FORWARD TO HAVING AN ADDITIONAL ROUTE TO THE SEA. HE SAID ZAMBIA WOULD MOVE AHEAD WITH PLANS FOR A ROAK LINK FROM ZAMBIA TO THE BENGUELA IN ANGOLA BYPASSING ZAIRE. THE THROUGH RAIL LINK IS THE BEST SOLUTION BUT ZAMBIA WANTED AN ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD REMAIN OPEN SHOULD THE RAIL ROUTE REMAIN OR BE CLOSED BECAUSE OF NEW ANGOLA/ZAIRE DIFFICULTIES. THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS THAT FINANCING FOR THE ROAD LINK WAS NOT AVAILABLE.

2. IN A SIDE COMMENT, CHINKULI OBSERVED THAT HE SEES
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NO SENSE IN IMPROVING PEDICLE ROAD ACROSS SHABA LINKING ZAMBIA'S COPPERBELT AND LUAPULA PROVINCES. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE IMPROVEMENT OF THE ROAD WILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF UNRULY AND UNCONTROLLED ZAIRIAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AND MILITARY. ZAMBIA IS THUS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING ROAD LINKS AROUND THE PEDICLE WHICH, THOUGH LONGER, WOULD BE MORE SECURE.

3. COMMENT: CHINKULI PROBABLY REFLECTS GRZ ATTITUDE ON
REOPENING OF BENGUELA--PROBABLY HOPEFUL BUT DEFINITELY
SKEPTICAL. CLINGERMAN

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